

WHEN will the study be complete and the construction of the interchange begin?

The Final EA is scheduled to be complete in 2007. The interchange design plans are being prepared as a Design/Build, which will allow the project to be constructed on an expedited schedule. Currently, it is anticipated that project construction could begin as early as 2007.

HOW will this project impact my personal property?

At this time, GDOT is still in the process of evaluating the impacts that may occur to specific properties. Keep in mind that final project limits are not yet determined. Should it be necessary to acquire either all or a portion of your personal property, representatives from GDOT would contact property owners to complete an appraisal inspection and discuss the acquisition of property that needs to be purchased for the I-85 interchange and associated roadway improvements project. GDOT makes every attempt to construct projects that cause the least amount of impacts to the environment while attempting to minimize property acquisition and relocations.

IS the cloverleaf interchange configuration a safe way for cars to exit the highway?

The cloverleaf or loop type ramp is a common highway interchange configuration. This ramp, if chosen as the preferred alternative, would incorporate several features to ensure that



the facility is safe including the degree of the curve, the posted speed limit and the grade of the ramp.

WHICH alternative will be constructed?

A set of build alternatives, which includes two different frontage road configurations and three different interchange configurations, and a No-build alternative are presently being evaluated through the Environmental Assessment (EA) process. Each of the alternatives will have positive and negative impacts, which will be evaluated and balanced until a preferred alternative is determined. The preferred alternative would then be refined and evaluated further to minimize impacts and identify potential mitigation efforts where impacts cannot feasibly be avoided. ■

NANCY, GET YOUR GUN!

When a group of concerned citizens are involved in the community, they can make a difference. A hometown example of citizens taking action is demonstrated by the Nancy Harts.

DURING THE CIVIL WAR, A GROUP OF CONCERNED WOMEN IN LAGRANGE REALIZED THAT THEIR TOWN HAD BECOME VULNERABLE WHEN MOST OF THE MEN LEFT WITH THE LAGRANGE LIGHT GUARD. IN APRIL 1862, THIS INSIGHTFUL GROUP OF WOMEN PUT OUT A CALL OF DUTY FOR ALL THE WOMEN IN THE TOWN. THE FORTY WOMEN WHO RESPONDED MET TO ORGANIZE AT AN OLD RED SCHOOLHOUSE. THIS GROUP, THE NANCY HARTS, WOULD BECOME A WELL-ORGANIZED, DISCIPLINED, COMMISSIONED MILITARY COMPANY THAT WOULD TRAIN REGULARLY FOR ALMOST THREE YEARS.



The militia company named itself the Nancy Harts, after the Revolutionary War heroine who single-handedly defended her home against a group of invading British soldiers. To attain a level of competence worthy of Nancy Hart's name, the women of LaGrange practiced twice a week completing drills and target practice. In the beginning, some of the women had a bad habit of closing their eyes just before shooting, causing them to miss their targets entirely. However, after several

months, their marching and marksmanship improved. Unfortunately, this was not before one stray shot killed a bull in a nearby pasture.

Though their marksmanship improved, their weapons still posed a challenge. When the men of the town left to fight the war, they took most of the good firearms with them. Consequently, the women were left with old guns. More than one member reported that the guns were in such poor condition they were unsure whether the muzzle or the breech was more dangerous!

Halfway through the war, LaGrange became a hospital town. Its rail connections to battlefields in Virginia, Tennessee, and Mississippi made it a logical choice. Every train passing through town delivered wounded and dying soldiers. Each of the Nancy Harts volunteered for regular hospital duty in addition to attending to her substantial militia and family responsibilities.

Several years into the war, the Nancy Harts were put to the test. In the spring of 1865, the key rail center of West Point, Georgia, drew the attention of the Union Army. Realizing its importance to the Confederacy, artillery units and 3,000 cavalymen were sent to destroy it. Approximately, 300 Confederate soldiers fought gallantly to defend the West Point Fort, but they could not hold out for long. Consequently, nineteen train engines and hundreds of railroad cars loaded with war supplies were destroyed.

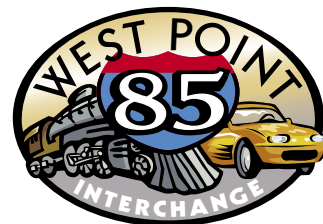
The defeat was troubling news for the Nancy Harts. Many had had family and loved ones at the fort. They were also concerned that the Federals would move on to LaGrange. Sure enough, retreating Confederate cavalymen brought news that Federal soldiers were coming up the road from West Point. The Nancy Harts quickly assembled and started marching to meet

them. At the sight of blue uniforms, the Nancy Harts formed a line and prepared for the worst.

The women were shocked to see many Confederate prisoners from the fort near the front of the column. They could not fire without endangering their loved ones. One woman called out to a prisoner, Major Parham, to explain the situation. The Federal colonel, coincidentally named Oscar H. LaGrange, interrupted. He told Parham to introduce him to the unit's captain. The captain, Nancy Morgan, informed him the women were determined to defend their families and homes. Colonel LaGrange responded by promising that if the group would disarm, no homes or peaceful citizens would be harmed. He was also overheard saying, "The Nancy Harts could probably use their eyes with better effect than their old guns."

The Nancy Harts had prevailed in their only confrontation, without firing a shot. Through the hard work of this group of dedicated citizens, LaGrange fared far better than many other occupied areas. By organizing and working toward a common goal to better the community, the Nancy Harts were able to make a difference. ■

SOURCE: <http://www.trouparchives.org/harts.html>



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Project Update

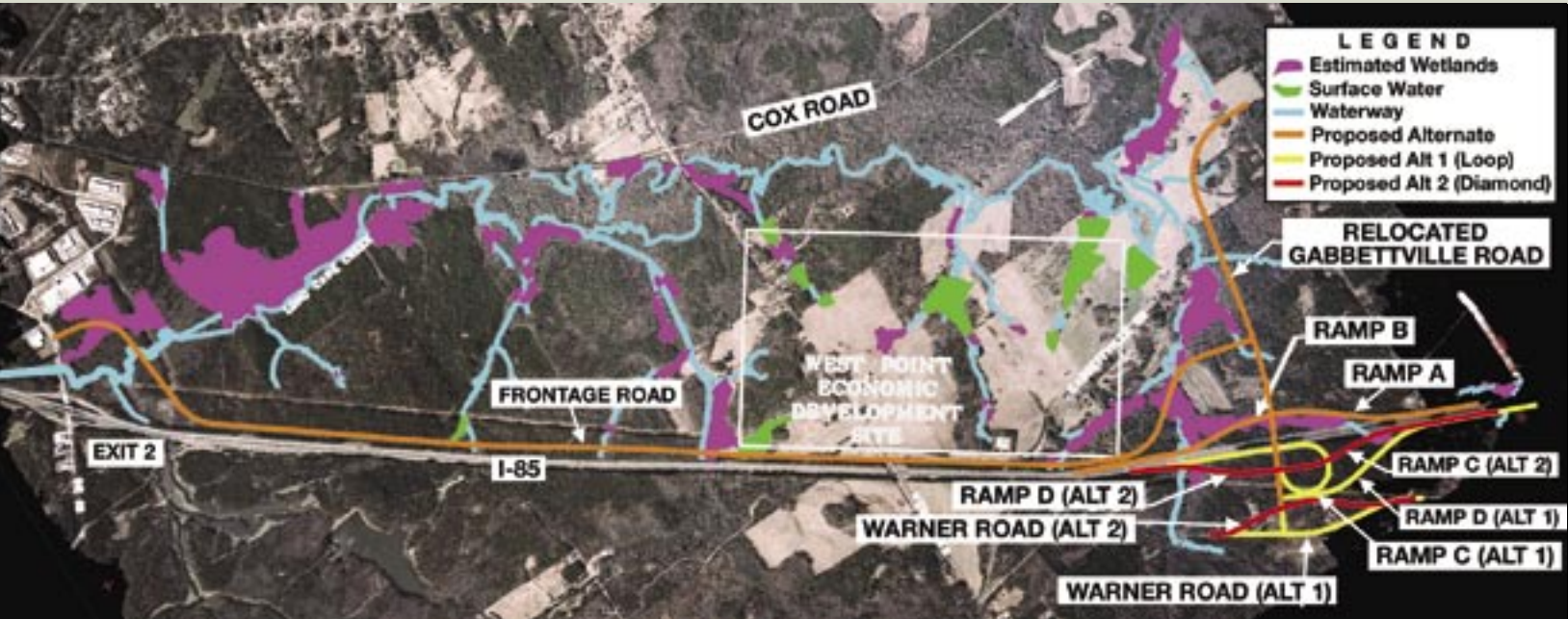
THE PROJECT TEAM HAS COMPLETED VARIOUS INVESTIGATIONS OF THE PROJECT STUDY AREA OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. THESE INCLUDED SURVEYS OF THE AREA ECOLOGY (FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE, WETLANDS, STREAMS), CULTURAL RESOURCES (HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY), COMMUNITY RESOURCES (CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, RESIDENTIAL AREAS, BUSINESSES), AND AIR AND NOISE IMPACTS. This data, also known as environmental constraints, were depicted on aerial maps of the study area prior to engineers refining the corridors to be evaluated. This process allowed engineers to develop concepts within these refined corridors that avoid or minimize impacts to these environmentally sensitive resources.

Now that the reasonable alternatives have been determined, the process to prepare the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to assess the detailed impacts of each alternative is well underway. There are more than 30 different categories of potential environmental impacts that must be evaluated for each of the alternatives.

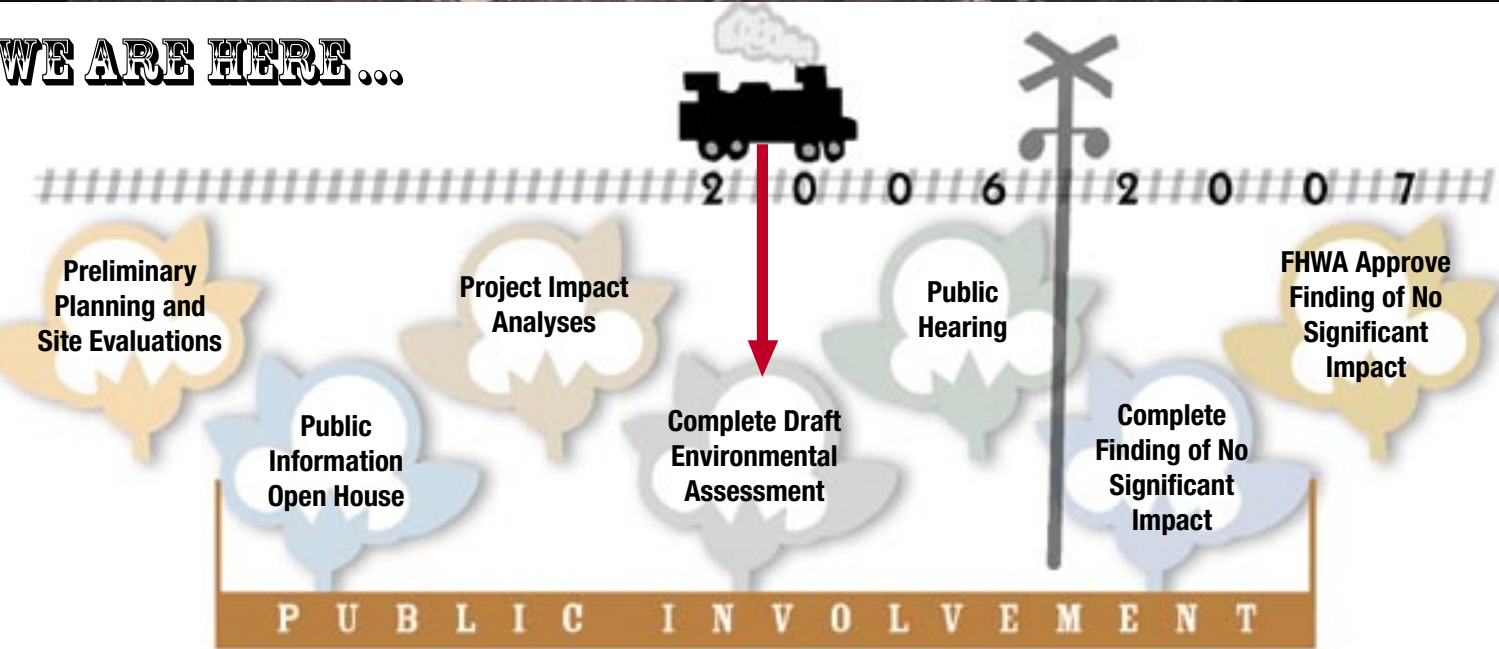
The final location of the West Point 85 Interchange involves a detailed process to identify the preferred alternative route of the roadway facility. The study team is evaluating and screening project alternatives through a three phase process: initial screening, intermediate screening and final evaluation. This evaluation process will apply increasingly detailed and comprehensive measures of effectiveness to a decreasing number of alternatives under consideration. Alternatives

carried forward for further evaluation will be those determined to best meet the transportation needs of the area while causing the least impact on environmentally sensitive areas. It is anticipated that a preferred alternative will be carried forward through initial and intermediate screening, and then subjected to a final evaluation in the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA).

At a public hearing later this year, the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will release the Draft EA for comments. The EA should disclose a preferred alternative that illustrates the refinement and evaluation process and further attempts to minimize impacts and identify potential mitigation efforts where impact avoidance is not feasible. ■



WE ARE HERE...



When You Drink from the Well, REMEMBER THE SPRING

— Ancient Chinese proverb

Whether you are at the beach, staying home or heading to work, water affects your life every day. The importance of Troup County's water resources will be reflected in the decisions made during all phases of the I-85 Interchange Project. Through diligent planning and site development, impacts to wetlands, streams and floodplains in the area can be minimized.

For instance, floodplains play an important role in carrying and storing floodwaters. Floodplain vegetation and soils serve as water filters that help intercept water before it enters other streams, rivers or lakes. This process aids in the removal of excess sedimentation, nutrients, and pollutants and reduces the need for costly clean-ups and sediment removal. When the volume of stormwater runoff increases, the size of floodplains will also increase. As part of the storm water system design, project engineers will evaluate potential impacts to floodplains and ensure that the project does not create flooding problems for surrounding properties.

Common storm water management practices will be used to alleviate any anticipated increases in pollution or runoff from the project. Best Management Practices (BMPs) for storm water management will be incorporated into the construction plans. Further, a variety of temporary erosion and sedimentation control measures will be used during project construction. These may include the use of berms, dams, sediment basins,

fiber mats, gravel, mulches, grasses, and other erosion control devices or methods, as applicable. These temporary provisions will also be coordinated with permanent erosion control features (such as re-vegetation) insofar as practical to assure economical, effective, and continuous erosion control throughout the construction and post-construction periods.

These same measures used to protect surface water quality will also be used to protect nearby drinking water wells. Long Cane Creek, which is located to the west of the proposed roadway project, is assumed to be where the groundwater is flowing. Because there are no wells between the roadway project and Long Cane Creek, impacts to wells are not anticipated to be a substantial concern. However, by providing swales and drainage basins directly adjacent to the proposed roadway improvements, storm water runoff from the project will be recharged close to the project and allow the maximum amount of natural filtering of runoff prior to it entering the groundwater in the area.

During the environmental process, potential impacts to wetlands, streams, and floodplains are identified and avoided



Box Turtle at Long Cane Creek

or minimized to the greatest extent possible. The project area was surveyed for wetlands and streams, also referred to as Jurisdictional Water of the United States, as well as floodplains. Once surveyed, the alignment of the new interchange can be placed in an attempt to avoid these areas. Where avoidance is not possible, an effort to minimize impacts is implemented. Based on the quantity of expected impacts, mitigation would be necessary for the impacts to wetlands and streams associated with the project. Mitigation can include preservation and/or enhancement of wetlands and streams in the project area or off site. This attempt to minimize potential impacts, benefits human populations as well as other species that rely on these systems for their survival. ■

THANKS FOR CONTRIBUTING!

The first Public Information Open House, held on July 25, 2006, at the West Point Gym was very well attended. The WestPoint-85 Project Team welcomed approximately 412 people from throughout the community and beyond.

The open house included presentations by the Georgia Department of Transportation for the I-85 interchange, and the Troup County Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Representatives from the Georgia Department of Economic Development and the Army

Corps of Engineers were also in attendance to answer questions regarding environmental studies and potential impacts associated with the Economic Development Site.

Approximately 58 comments were submitted through the various comment options including comment forms, a court reporter, mail in forms, or by email. The project team is using the information gathered to update the project study area map and to help make further decisions on how the project proceeds. A response letter summarizing all comments

received and how the issues will be considered as the project moves forward would be mailed to those who submitted a comment and will become part of the environmental assessment document.

The next opportunity for community involvement will be in December 2006, when the project team will hold a Public Hearing Open House (PHOH). The date, time and location will be widely advertised as the proposed project progresses. The Project Team looks forward to meeting with the community again to discuss the proposed interchange project further. ■